



# Recognizing and Reducing Anxiety in Times of Crisis

You may be feeling worried and fearful about the recent news reporting a case of Ebola occurring within the United States. Situations like this can increase levels of stress and anxiety. It is important to be educated about your sources of stress to understand some of the triggers and red flags you may have with processing information about this information. There can often be rumors and misinformation about a stressful event – be sure you receive updates from a reliable news source so you are not misguided about the true risk and precautions available in your community.

## What are common reactions?

Uncertainty within the community can cause both physical and emotional and mental reactions. You may feel angry, enraged, confused, sad or even guilty. When those feelings don't go away over a few weeks, or when they seem to get worse, it may be appropriate to seek help for yourself or the person in your life who is experiencing these difficulties. Among the signs to look for over time are:

- Feeling tense and nervous
- Constant exhaustion
- Difficulty sleeping
- Constant crying
- Isolation
- Excessive alcohol and/or drug use
- Difficulty concentrating

## What can you do to help?

There are simple steps that can be taken. Take time to recognize what emotions you are feeling and think about why they are present. Recognize how your family and friends are feeling and if you think there may be experiencing a similar reaction. Take some time to get advice from someone trained to recognize the signs and symptoms related to worry and fear.

## Speaking to children

Pay special attention to children's needs and speak with them in a calm and supportive way about their fears. Children best receive information in "small bites". These "small bites" should be truthful and not flowered with unrealistic assurances. When providing assurances, stress that there are adults here to support and protect them if they ever feel afraid or have questions they need answered.

## When to seek professional help

You should get immediate help from a trained professional if you or a loved one is experiencing any of these problems:

- Inability to return to normal routine
- Feeling helpless
- Having thoughts of hurting one's self or others
- Excessive use alcohol and drugs

*This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Health does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.*